

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the following claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A microelectronic device, comprising:  
a semiconductor substrate; and  
a nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer on said semiconductor substrate,  
wherein said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer exhibits low leakage current  
and high nitrogen concentration.
2. (Original) The microelectronic device of Claim 1, wherein the  
nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer comprises a silicon oxynitride.
3. (Previously Presented) The microelectronic device of Claim 2 ,  
wherein said silicon oxynitride is a material in accordance with the  
expression  $\text{SiO}_x\text{N}_{(4-2x)/3}$  where  $0 \leq x \leq 2$ .
4. (Previously Presented) The microelectronic device of Claim 1,  
wherein said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer has a thickness less than  
approximately 7 angstroms.
5. (Previously Presented) The microelectronic device of Claim 1,  
wherein said semiconductor substrate comprises a silicon wafer.
6. (Previously Presented) The microelectronic device of Claim 4,  
further comprising a gate electrode disposed over said nitridized  
hydroxy-silicate layer.

7. (Previously Presented) The microelectronic device of Claim 6, further comprising a pair of source/drain terminals disposed in the semiconductor substrate, substantially adjacent to said gate electrode.

8. (Currently Amended) A field effect transistor, comprising:  
a gate electrode;  
a pair of source/drain terminals disposed in a substrate,  
substantially adjacent said gate electrode; and  
a gate dielectric disposed between the gate electrode and the substrate, the gate dielectric comprising a nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer, ~~less than or equal to approximately 7 angstroms wherein said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer exhibits low leakage current and high nitrogen concentration.~~

9-26 (Cancelled)

27. (New) The microelectronic device of claim 1, wherein the dielectric constant of said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer is greater than the dielectric constant of silicon dioxide.

28. (New) The microelectronic device of claim 1, wherein the defect density attributed to particles of said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer is less than the defect density attributed to particles of silicon dioxide.

29. (New) The microelectronic device of claim 1, wherein said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer is resistant to native oxide growth.

30. (New) The field effect transistor of claim 8, wherein said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer is less than or equal to approximately 7 angstroms.

31. (New) The field effect transistor of claim 8, wherein said nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer does not attract particles.